What does the future *look* like?

QuickTime™ and a
MPEG-4 Video decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Will we still use these?

And what about these?

I had a lot of questions...

So...

...I asked some experts:

Robin Toibin
Snowbooks

Dr Ian Richardson
UCL/PA

Andrew Latchford
Chipmunka

And I did a lot of reading:

Some online...

© Copyright 2006 Apple Computer

and some good old-fashioned wood pulp...

Here's what I found

First, some terms

- Web 2.0

- Creative Commons
(obscurity vs piracy. some rights reserved)

- Open Source
(wethink. fixation. distibuted networks)

- Long Tail/The Long Tail effect

- 'Wikis'

- Aggregator

Publishing/Bookselling

There are (broadly) two schools of thought...

The Traditional View

- Copyright must be upheld in the digital era to protect artists and producers

- If necessary, tighter IP controls should be applied to uphold exclusivity (DMCA/Cease and Decist)

-Quality cannot be controlled without specialist licensers (agents and publishers)

- The book itself cannot be replaced

- Readers love the look and feel of books

- ebooks have been around for a long time already

The Radical View

Cue video - Snowbooks in Second Life

-Looked at from outside, publishing is not efficient (Snowbooks/Amazon/Booksurge)

-How can it work better for writers and readers?

-The arrival of an iBook/device will transform the sector

-Open Source/Creative Commons principles will apply to books

- Why can't readers dictate 'quality'?

Writers

- writing is *changing:*

- blogs

- wiki-novels

- blooks

- Will the novel remain the dominant form?

- Will short stories, serials, extracts, or compilations take over?

- What about re-mixing?

And readers?

- Readers will now be able to access any text, at the click of a mouse

- Texts will be hyperlinked, seamlessy interwoven

- Will we have the time/attention span to devote to novels?

Some (probably obsolete) Predictions:

The 'Mongrel' Economy

- Bookselling will fragment into a more diverse industry, with more online players

-Publishers will increasingly take advantage of POD, mobile networks and online resources to distribute books direct

- Authors will begin to use the same technology, and CC licensing, to reach a wider audience and change the balance of payment

- Aggregators (iBooks/Amazon) will be the big winners, developing a major new consumer base and taking a bigger slice of the existing one
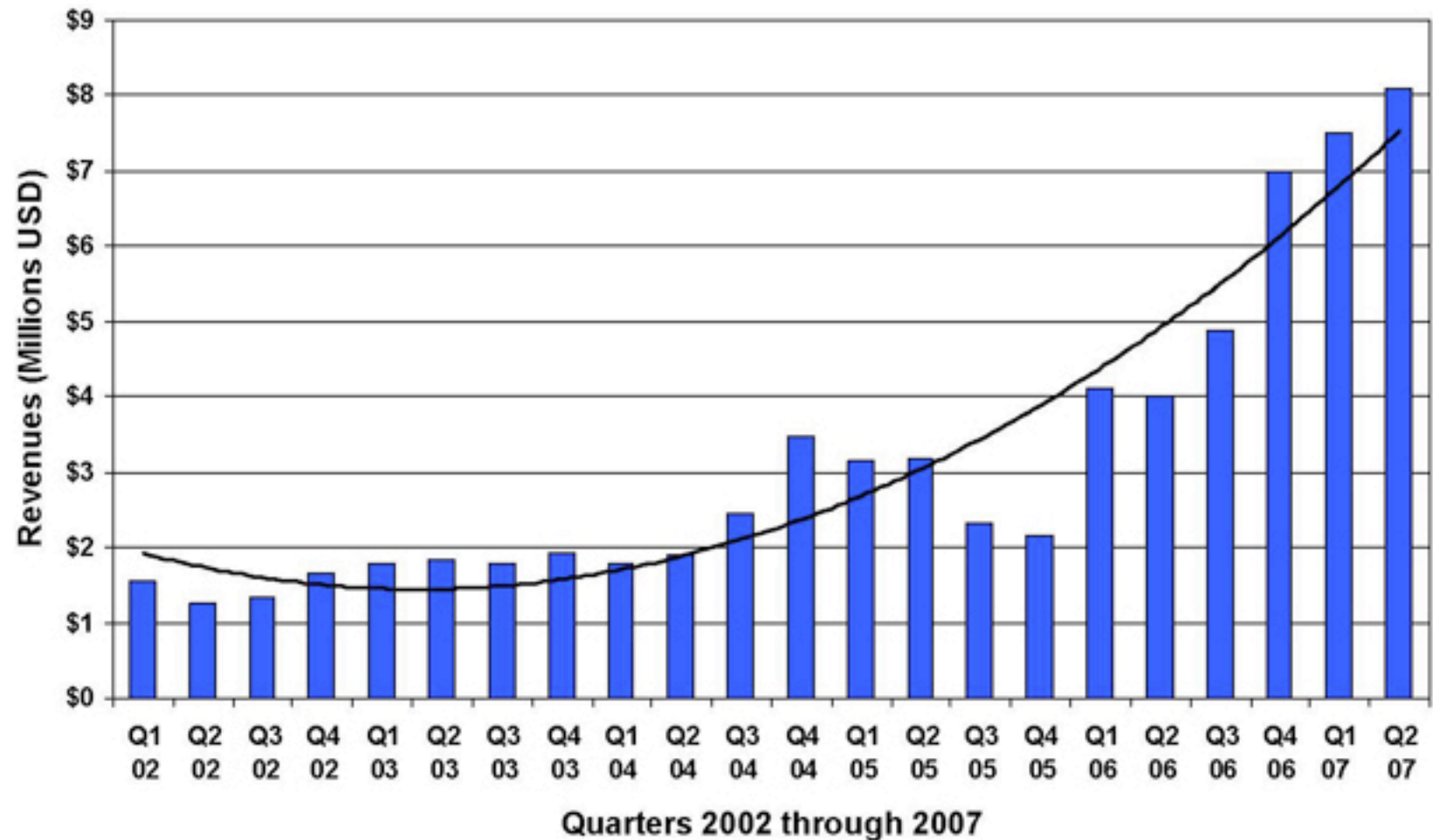
(fig.1)

Fig.1 - Bookselling 2012?

Chains　　Aggregators　　S/Published　　Publishers/POD

40%

25%

10%

25%
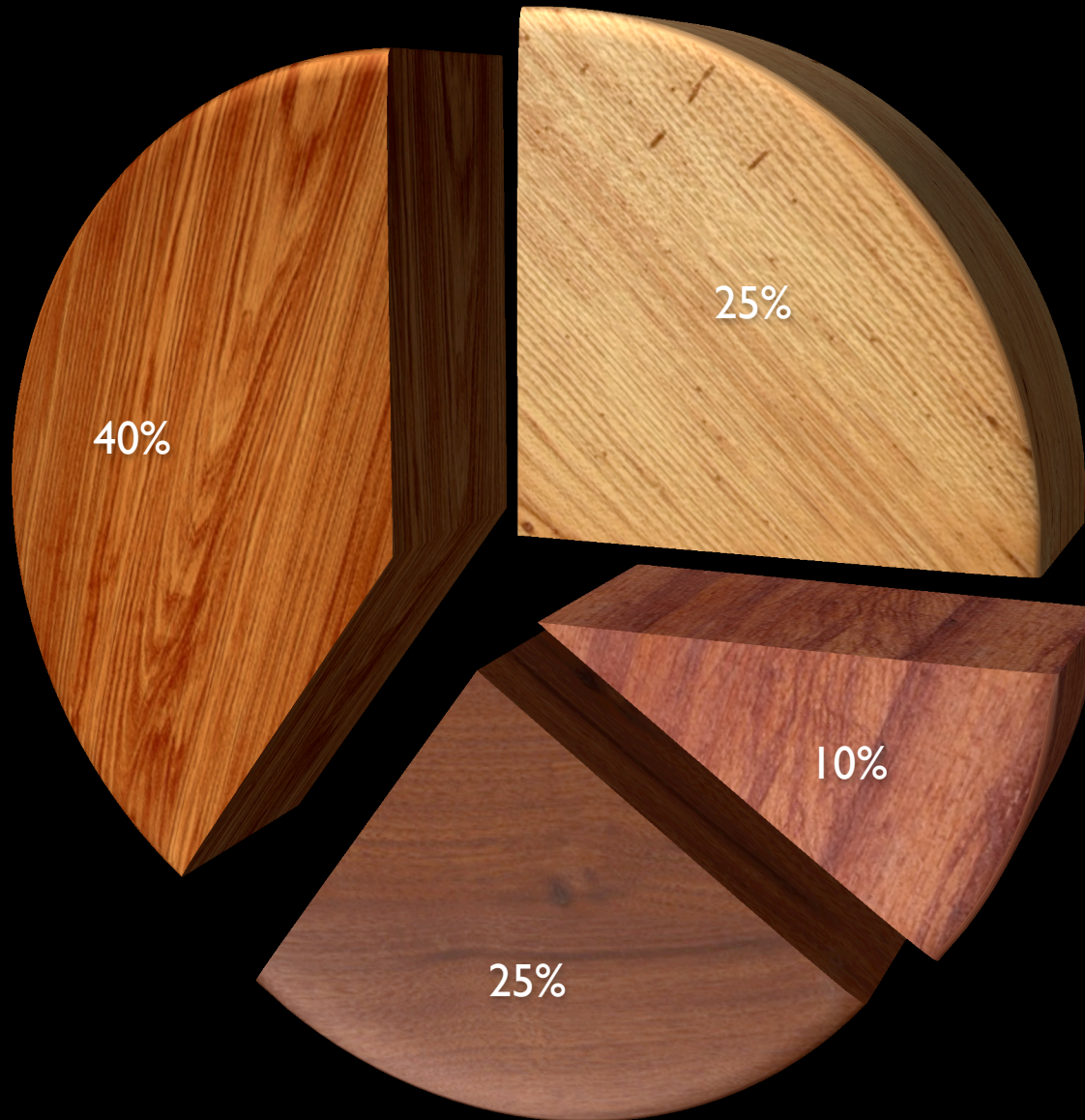
Actual revenue from ebook sales (US 02-07)

"In Japan, sales of electronic books, including manga, through mobile phones grew 331.3% from 1.6bn yen to 6.9bn yen in 2006. For 2007, sales are predicted to increase to 11.7bn yen - about £60m - overtaking projected fixed internet e-book sales of 9.4bn yen."

- MediaGuardian, Sept 24 2007

The Google Library

- Google's mission, 'to organize the world's information'

- The possibility of a Borgesian 'Ultimate Library'

- Implications for academic publishing and research libraries

- Current models of digital journals - licensing

Future of the book

- On Demand Books - 'Espresso machine' video

- The physical object - will it survive the 'iBook'?

- How will purchasing/distribution of 'real books' change?

The book is no longer a finite object.
It has become a porous digital text,
capable of mutation and variation.

This has several implications for textual authority, criticism
and interpretation.

The internet: a radical view

The internet changes behaviour on and offline

- once the relationship of producer, distributor, consumer, is disrupted online, it becomes more questionable offline too.

- open source principles spread beyond collaboration in developing new software

- the role of participants changes - people become less passive - viz. 'blogosphere'

The role of ACE

- Discerning boundary between amateur/professional?

- Supporting innovation?

- Equipping organisations to compete in new environment, or finding proxies?

- Ensuring digital participation and work maintains high quality?

Conclusions

- Change is already well underway

- 'Iceberg' principle - lots is not visible yet

- Publishers and booksellers, the whole supply chain, will have to adapt quickly

- ACE can play active role, but must understand what it's getting into, and how best to support change

Acknowledgements
and Select Bibliography

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